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HINTS FOR THE YOUNG

IN RELATION TO THE

HEALTH OF BODY AND MIND.

BY S. B. WOODWARD, M. D.,

LATE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE WORCESTER LUNATIC ASYLUM.

TENTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:

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IMPORTANT COMMENDATIONS
OF
WOODWARD'S HINTS FOR THE YOUNG.

From Professor Moses Stuart.

I have read the Treatise entitled HINTS FOR THE YOUNG, and have not a doubt that the interests of humanity, religion, and purity, as well as a regard for the health and mental capacity of the rising generation in particular, call for a prudent but wide diffusion of it throughout our country.

M. STUART.

Theological Seminary, Andover, 29th June, 1841.

From other distinguished Professors at Andover.

"HINTS FOR THE YOUNG," written by Dr. Woodward of Worcester, is, in our opinion, an excellent treatise, and well suited to be useful to those for whom it was written.

J. EDWARDS.
LEONARD WOODS.
RALPH EMERSON.
LYMAN COLEMAN.
S. H. TAYLOR.

Andover, June 29, 1841.

From the Annals of Education.

In consenting to the publication of this little manual, Dr. Woodward has rendered a great public service. The evil to which he alludes is far more common and destructive than is generally supposed. Thousands believe or feign to believe, that Mr. Graham and others, have either unintentionally or by design exaggerated it. We hope the work before us will serve to convince—"if aught can do it"—the most skeptical, that it is high time to understand the matter as it is, and to take such measures in reference to its prevention as the nature of the case and the circumstances may admit.

From the Boston Recorder.

It is something more than fastidiousness of taste; would that it were anything short of vitiated moral feeling, that condemns the efforts of philanthropic individuals to expose the physical and moral dangers of vices "which are not fit to be named," and to warn the rising generation against pollutions that cannot be indulged even to a small degree, without imminent hazard to every personal interest. This unpretending tract is evidently the work of a master, a physician well skilled in the science of his profession, and a sincere friend to the youth of his country. It deserves and claims "an extensive circulation amongst parents, teachers, and youth," that it may "prove a PREVENTIVE as well as a CURE," to a wide spread and exceedingly injurious evil to the young.

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NOTE.

A PART of the matter now published in the following pages, appeared in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, in 1835. The papers, in this way, had an extensive circulation among medical men, and they were written originally for professional gentlemen only. Other benevolent individuals, however, read them, and they were copied into newspapers, and thus reached many persons in the community. Since that time the writer has been frequently solicited to publish them in a more popular form, or to prepare something appropriate on the subject, and give it extensive circulation among parents, teachers and youth, to prove a **PREVENTIVE** as well as a **CURE**.

That the evil is wide spread and exceedingly injurious to the young, cannot be denied, or doubted. Its effects upon physical strength and constitutional stamina, are very prejudicial

Its influence in prostrating the mind is no less appalling. Consumptions, spinal distortions, weak and painful eyes, weak stomachs, nervous headaches, and a host of other diseases, mark its influence upon the one—loss of memory and the power of application, insanity and idiotism, show its devastating effects upon the other.

It is equally opposed to moral purity and mental vigor. It keeps up the influence of unhallowed desires ;—it gives the passions an ascendancy in the character—fills the mind with lewd and corrupt images, and transforms its victim to a filthy and disgusting reptile.

The evil is common ; its danger little known. Let the young beware of it, and those who are in the way of danger, abandon it forever !

HINTS FOR THE YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

It can hardly be said that the attention of parents, teachers, or even the members of the medical profession, is duly awakened to the dangers which arise from the habit of Masturbation. Even at this time many doubt the expediency of bringing the subject before the public in any form, believing that diffusing information may be the cause of greater evil to the young, than the benefits which may arise from a knowledge of those dangers to all.—Those who hold to these opinions are hardly aware how extensively known the habit is with the young, and how early in life it is sometimes practised. I have never conversed with a lad of twelve years of age who did not know all about the practice, and understand the language commonly used to describe it. It is certainly

quite too common an opinion, that it is safe and harmless, and may be indulged with impunity to a certain extent. Till recently, I had supposed that this view of masturbation was confined to the ignorant and vulgar only; lately, however, I have seen a prescription from a physician of some reputation, in a case of spontaneous emission of semen, in which he directs *that the patient practise it twice a week* as a means of cure! Supposing that the patient might have some doubt of the propriety of the remedy, he proceeds to urge him to the practice as affording the surest mode of relief! Religious principles, conscientious scruples, and the common sense of the patient, led him to very different views of his case; he was not ready to resort to a practice for a *cure*, which he well knew to be the *cause* of all his affliction. By pursuing a course quite opposite to the one recommended, he is, in all respects, improving; he has the satisfaction of preserving both his health and moral purity—a consideration of no small value to the virtuous mind.

If the apprehension of physical evil is not sufficient to deter from a practice fraught with so disastrous effects, the conscientious scruples, and religious principles of every virtuous youth

should be awakened to deter him from the practice, or lead him to abandon it in future.

It is a vice which excites, to the greatest activity, the strongest and most uncontrollable propensities of animal nature; and these are rendered more active by indulgence, while the power of resistance and restraint is lessened by it in a tenfold degree. The moral sensibility becomes so blunted as to retain no ascendancy in the character, to control and regulate the conduct. Under such circumstances, the best resolutions to reform, and the firmest determination to abandon the habit, fail of accomplishment. In spite of himself, the victim sinks deeper and deeper in pollution, till he is overwhelmed at last in irretrievable ruin and disgrace.

Can a practice be innocent which so prostrates all the powers of body and mind, which corrupts the very fountain of moral virtue, and entails imperfection and imbecility on unborn generations?

From the hand of God himself we receive the noble attributes which distinguish us from the animals around us. This vice reduces us below their level. To Him are we responsible for this abuse of faculties which are given us

to improve and to cultivate for our own happiness and that of our fellow creatures. We cannot, with impunity, violate the laws of our being. This organic law of our formation, is imperative and abiding—no abuse of it will go unpunished—suffering will follow, if it be not scrupulously obeyed.

The propensity which leads to the evil in question, is ever active, and perhaps more frequently leads the young astray than any other ; it should, therefore, be more effectually restrained and more carefully controlled. Indulgence, instead of giving relief to its excitement, always increases it. Just in proportion to the gratification, will be the increase of desire. This is true of all the animal appetites and feelings.

There would be the same propriety in directing the intemperate man to resort to spirituous liquors to remove the appetite which his habit had created, as to recommend self-pollution to remove any symptom of disease which had previously arisen from it, or which had, in any other manner, become excited.

To those who doubt the corporeal or mental suffering from indulgence in this vice, I would commend the perusal of the following letter :

DEAR SIR :—Nothing but my deplorable situation would induce me to trespass upon your mind and patience in this esoteric manner. I am well aware that I ought to apologize for thus obtruding myself upon your notice, but I am equally confident that if you could realize the full extent of my misery, you would deem no other apology necessary. Trusting, therefore, in your well known sympathy and benevolence, I have ventured to lay before you my real condition, hoping that if it be in your power to relieve me, you will afford me the benefit of your medical skill and experience.

From the age of fourteen till within two years past, (I am now twenty-three,) I indulged in the frequent habit of self-pollution, like too many others, unconscious of the evil I was bringing upon myself. During this period I was occasionally subject to involuntary emissions, but not so often as to cause any alarm, till about two years since, when the occurrence became so frequent as to cause me much uneasiness. I was then led to reflect seriously upon my course, and to read on the subject, and resolved to abstain from my vile practice. This resolution had often been made before, but had as often been violated ; for the strength of the habit of

masturbation is such as none can estimate who has never been under its overpowering influence. At last, however, I was enabled to conquer it—but alas! too late—I was held an unwilling captive. The spontaneous emissions of semen still continued, and have occurred almost every night since that time, and sometimes twice in the same night, and even sometimes when running for a short distance, or in riding. Having endured so long under this blighting, withering curse, my constitution, naturally *very* strong, is broken down, and my mind, as well as body, completely enervated. I am haunted day and night with lascivious thoughts and dreams; suspicious of my friends and disgusted with myself. My memory has lost its power—unable to fix my attention—my mind is filled with terrible forebodings—fear of insanity, and at times it has cost me a continual effort to retain my reason. It is with difficulty that I walk, or stand, or even sit erect. An inclination to lie down and sleep, which desire I am sensible I have indulged too much:—my sleep never refreshes me;—I rise in the morning weak and weary, to drag out another miserable day. O how often have I wished for death, or rather oblivion, or any thing to terminate my woes. I

have of late been much annoyed with constant little twitchings or spasms in various parts of my body, and frequently in my face. Sometimes, however, they are so violent as to affect the whole limb with a sudden convulsion.

But more particularly my right eye is rapidly failing; whether the disease be the cataract or amaurosis, I am at a loss to decide; it seems to have some of the peculiar characteristics of both. About two years ago I first noticed several small spots or hubbles floating before my eyes; these have gradually become larger and more numerous, until my eye-sight is very much clouded. These "cobwebs" constantly floating before my eyes when I read, or walk, or look, annoy me excessively, and should they continue to increase at this rate, it cannot be many months before the result will be total loss of vision. My eyes, particularly in the morning, are affected with a burning sensation, which renders it almost impossible for me to use them for several minutes after rising—they seem to be full of sand;—the light is very oppressive;—I usually keep the blind closed to my room at all times of the day.

I am confident this disease of the eyes is the direct result of my venereal complaint, although

a very respectable physician, to whom I stated my case about a year since, laughed at the idea of there being any connection between the two. With this exception I have suffered in silence, not knowing where to go for advice or assistance. I am now alone in this city—away from home, and in fact I am alone in the world—none to whom I dare communicate the cause of my distress, although I fear at times that my friends suspect it or something worse. Various reasons have conspired to prevent me from seeking medical aid:—the want of money to pay their charges—shame for my situation—a hope of recovery without the expense, which I can poorly afford; for I am without funds except a small salary I am, for the present, receiving, and am in debt for my academical education, which I completed not long since at one of the New England colleges. I am looking forward to the profession of ——— O, I cannot name it, vile and guilty as I am. *Would to God I had known what I now know when first tempted to this life, health and soul-destroying vice.* I feel that I cannot hold out much longer, either mentally or physically. I have dieted myself—abstaining for a while from all animal food—then giving up tea and coffee. I experi-

enced no benefit from the change, and resumed them. I have tried violent and moderate and no exercise, (the last of which is altogether more congenial to my feelings, although not to my natural temperament.) I have, for a few weeks past, been making use of Port wine; but nothing seems to affect my disease. I have not, it is true, pursued any regular systematic course of regimen, for I have not known what to do. A few days since, I read a little tract on this subject, written, I believe, by you; but I find nothing in it *particularly* adapted to my case. If your experience in such unhappy cases can suggest any thing, do, sir, have pity on me. Can you give me any *particular* advice as to medicine, diet, and exercise, &c.? What shall I do for my eyes?

Can you direct me to any physician in this city, from whose experience and skill I might hope for assistance? Had I better apply to an oculist, or will it do no good to doctor for my eyes, while my health is in such a state?

If you condescend to notice this, do, dear sir, answer it as soon as your convenience will allow. I am expecting to leave town in about a fortnight, to be absent for several weeks, and if I could hear from you before leaving, it would

be esteemed a great favor, and ever be gratefully remembered by an obliged sufferer.

“Would to God I had known what I now know, when first tempted to pursue this life, health and soul-destroying vice,” is the emphatic language of this unhappy sufferer, whose physical distress, great as it is, is far less than his mental anguish. Such is the language of almost every young man, who seeks relief from his medical adviser from the disastrous consequences of indulgence in this evil habit. Is not this an effectual answer to the caviller who would never teach the young the danger of this vicious indulgence? I have never yet found the youth who did not commence this vice ignorant of its consequences, and even of its moral turpitude. I have rarely found one who retained his reason who did not abandon it on being admonished of its danger. Many an individual, when insane, has been so impressed and satisfied of its impropriety and sinfulness, as to abandon it, and recover; while hundreds on whom moral influence could make no impression, go on recklessly to the ruin of mind and body.

Much experience has taught me that this is an important and necessary subject of education; that information should be diffused upon it; that the young should be admonished, and the whole community enlightened, so that no one shall himself suffer or witness the ravages of the vice upon those around him, without being able to detect it, and avoid it before it be too late.

A hint from a parent who understands the case, may be sufficient. A tract extensively circulated, may do much good as a preventive and a cure, before serious injury is done to health or intellect. In schools of all grades, and manufactories, indeed, in all places where the young are congregated, they should sleep in separate beds, understand the danger of the least indulgence in this vice, and scrupulously avoid every thing which shall tend to it. Lascivious books, pictures, company and conversation should be discarded. I am constrained to believe that the fondling of young persons, the embrace of individuals of the same sex or different sexes, and many of the familiarities which the custom of society admit, while they may be entirely innocent in a thousand cases, awaken propensities in others which should lead to their universal abandonment. I am aware that these

views may be considered extravagant and absurd. I can only say that facts, numerous and incontrovertible, coming to my knowledge almost daily, impress me most forcibly of their truth. The propensities should never be educated; they are always active and easily excited, and require the constant restraints of the moral and intellectual powers, or they gain too much ascendancy in the character, and too much influence over the conduct. Whatever circumstances resulting from the intercourse of the young shall awaken to increased activity these feelings of our nature, should be scrupulously avoided.

Nothing can be more commendable in the young, or more approved in the sight of our Maker, than purity of character and high moral influence. Nothing can be more debasing in itself, nothing more repugnant to the pure feelings of uncorrupted youth, nothing more wicked in the sight of Him whose purity is as transcendent as his power is infinite, than those vicious practices which blot out the intellect, debase the moral feelings, blast the rising hopes, and prostrate the physical energies which God has given to man, to elevate him in the scale of being, fit him for usefulness in this life, and immortal happiness hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

THE pernicious and debasing practice of masturbation is a more common and extensive evil with youth of both sexes, than is usually supposed. The influence of this habit upon both mind and body, severe as it has been considered, and greatly as it has been deprecated, is altogether more prejudicial than the public, and, as it is believed, even the medical profession, are aware.

It is perhaps as common with persons of apparently fair moral character, as with the openly vicious. Such persons are often surprised that it should be considered a vice, or a cause of disease, having supposed it quite harmless.

The indications by which parents and friends may be led to suspect this vice, are ill health, especially debility, paleness, with a downcast look, and a disposition to retirement and seclusion, a jealousy and suspicion of those in whom they used to place confidence, and who were former associates and friends. In the progress

of the disease, the victim of it becomes apprehensive that friends dislike and avoid him, that he is the subject of ridicule and censure, and is an object of inspection, marked by every one who comes into his presence, or passes by him in his walks. Hence he retires from society, and chooses to be alone—while alone he sometimes talks to himself, and often laughs much and frequently, and sometimes aloud.

A great number of the evils which come upon the young at and after the age of puberty, arise from this habit, persisted in, so as to waste the vital energies and enervate the physical and mental powers of man. Nor less does it sap the foundation of moral principles, and blast the first budding of manly and honorable feelings which were exhibiting themselves in the opening character of the young.

Many of the weaknesses commonly attributed to growth and the changes in the habit by the important transformation from adolescence to manhood, are justly referable to this practice.

This change requires all the energy of the system, greatly increased as it is at this period of life, which, if undisturbed, will bring about a vigorous and healthy condition of both the mental and physical powers.

If masturbation be commenced at this period, it cannot fail to interrupt, essentially, this important process; and if continued, will inevitably impress imbecility on the constitution, not less apparent in the body than the mind, preventing, as it will not fail to do, the full development of the powers of both.

The individual becomes feeble, is unable to labor with accustomed vigor, or to apply his mind to study; his step is tardy and weak, he is dull, irresolute, engages in his sports with less energy than usual, and avoids social intercourse; when at rest, he instinctively assumes a lolling or recumbent posture; and if at labor or at his games, takes every opportunity to lie down or set in a bent or curved position. The cause of these infirmities is *often* unknown to the subject of them, and *more generally* to the friends; and to labor, or study, or growth, is attributed all the evils which arise from the practice of this secret vice, which, if persisted in, will hardly fail to result in irremediable disease or hopeless idiocy. The natural consequence of indulgence in this, as in most other vices, is an increased propensity to pursue it. This is particularly true of masturbation. In my intercourse with this unfortunate class of individuals, I have

found a large proportion of them wholly ignorant of the cause of their complaints; and if not too far gone, the abandonment of the habit has, after a while, removed all symptoms, and resulted in confirmed health.

One young man now under my care, was first arrested in his career by reading the chapters on this subject in the *Young Man's Guide*. For many months he has totally abstained from the practice, and yet he is feeble, depressed, irresolute, and unable to fix his attention to any subject, or to pursue any active employment. But he is steadily convalescing, and will doubtless recover.

If the symptoms above enumerated do not lead to apprehensions of danger, and are not followed by a discontinuance of the habit, other symptoms, more formidable, and more difficult of cure, will present themselves. The back becomes lame and weak, the limbs tremble, the digestion is disturbed, and costiveness or diarrhœa, or an alternation of them, takes place. The head becomes painful, the heart palpitates, the respiration is easily hurried, the mind is depressed and gloomy, the temper becomes irritable, the sleep disturbed, and is attended with lascivious dreams, and not un-

frequently nocturnal pollutions. With these symptoms the pulse becomes small, the extremities cold and damp; the countenance is downcast, the eye without natural lustre; shamefacedness is apparent, as if the unfortunate victim was conscious of his degraded condition.

The stomach often rejects food, and is affected with acidity and loathing; the nervous system becomes highly irritable; neuralgia, tabes dorsalis, pulmonary consumption, or fatal marasmus, terminate the suffering, or else insanity and deplorable idiocy are the fatal result. Long before such an event, the mind is enfeebled, the memory impaired, and the power of fixing the attention lost. These are symptoms which should awaken our attention to the danger of the case, and which should induce us to sound the alarm, and, if possible, arrest the victim from the inevitable consequences of persisting in the habit.

There seems to be a strong influence from this secret vice upon the eyes. A learned professor informed me that he had never seen a case of *gutta serrena* that was not attributable to this practice, or excessive indulgence of the sexual propensity. Weak eyes, and particularly neuralgia of the eyes, or a pain in the eyes with-

out apparent inflammation or local disease, probably often arise from it. I recently saw a cataract forming in both the eyes of a young female, whose general health had been greatly impaired by self-pollution.

The following extract of a letter dated Aug. 22, 1838, from a young man who has for some months past had a distressing pain of the *eyes* and *head*, which has made him a great sufferer, and almost incapacitated him for business, shows the influence of self-pollution, and the evils which result from it in producing these diseases.

“ When I was between *thirteen* and *fourteen* years of age, and I do not know but between *eleven* and *twelve*, I think, however, it is the latter, I was induced by a young man with whom I slept, to follow the practice of masturbation, though not without some threats on his part, and indeed was forced to by him. After a while I needed neither forcing nor threatening, but did it voluntarily from three to twelve times a week, till I was between seventeen and eighteen, when I became convinced it was sinful, and abandoned it; and never, to my knowledge, have practised it since, no, not even once, as I made it a matter of conscience; but I have

had the spontaneous or involuntary emissions, and the nocturnal pollution more or less ever since, especially in lascivious dreams; and sometimes in female company, the involuntary emissions have troubled me greatly. For years, I never harbored the thought that it was injuring my health; but since my eyes have troubled me, which is between two and three years, I have sometimes thought it might be owing to this cause. I am now about twenty-one years of age."

In females, leucorrhœa or fluor albus is often induced by masturbation, and I doubt not incontinence of the urine, stranguary, prolapsus uteri, and many other diseases, both local and general, which have been attributed to other causes.

It is often difficult to obtain information on the subject of masturbation. Where it is suspected by the physician, the friends are wholly ignorant of it, and the individual suffering is not ready to acknowledge a practice which he is often conscious is filthy in the extreme, although he may have had no suspicions of its deleterious influence upon his health.

It is not sufficient that we know the consequences of masturbation, for these are often

irremediable disease; we ought to know the symptoms of its commencement, of the incipient stages of those diseases which result from it, as well as the influence of the moderate practice of it upon the physical and mental stamina of the man—for it is not too much to say, that the practice cannot be followed by either sex, even in a moderate way, without injury.

Nature designs that this drain upon the system should be reserved to mature age, and even then that it be made but sparingly. Sturdy manhood, in all its vigor, loses its energy and bends under the too frequent expenditure of this important secretion; and no age or condition will protect a man from the danger of unlimited indulgence, legally and naturally exercised.

In the young, however, its influence is much more seriously felt; and even those who have indulged so cautiously as not to break down the health and the mind, cannot know how much their physical energy, mental vigor, and moral sensibility have been affected by the indulgence.

Nothing short of total abstinence from the practice can save those who have become the victims of it. In this indulgence, no half way

course will ever subdue the disease, or remove the effect of the habit from the system. Total abstinence is the only remedy. If the constitution is not fatally impaired—if organic disease has not already taken place, this remedy will prove effectual, and must be adopted, especially in all cases in which the effects are visible, or the consequences cannot fail to be ultimately fatal.

This means of cure may be seconded by others, which may be found necessary to remove the effects of the habit upon the physical system. Suffice it to remark here, that total abstinence, in an aggravated form of masturbation, is not easily effected. Slight irritation will produce an expenditure of the secretion quite involuntary, and spontaneous emissions and nocturnal pollution may, for a long time, prolong the danger, and prevent that renovation of the powers which would otherwise be the result of the good resolution of the victim of the habit.

In a subsequent chapter we may consider the influence of masturbation upon the mind, as a cause of insanity and idiocy, and suggest some remedies for the removal of its effects upon the health.

CHAPTER III.

No cause is more influential in producing insanity, and in a special manner perpetuating the disease, than masturbation. The records of the institutions give an appalling catalogue of cases attributed to this cause; and yet such records do not show nearly all the cases which are justly ascribable to it. For it is so obscure, and so secret in its operation, that the friends in almost all cases are wholly ignorant of it. It is in a few cases, only, where the practice of the vice becomes shamefully notorious, that friends are willing to allow its agency in the production of any disease, particularly insanity; and yet no cause operates more directly upon the mind and the feeling. The mental energies are prostrated by the habit in innumerable cases, long before the delusions of insanity appear. Indeed, there are many cases in which insanity does not intervene between the incipient stages of that mental and physical imbecility, which comes early upon the victim of masturbation,

and the most deplorable and hopeless idiocy, in which it frequently results.

This is perhaps peculiar to this cause of idiocy. I know of no other which does not produce the ravings and illusions of insanity, or the gloomy musings, agitations and alarms of melancholy, before the mind is lost in idiotism. But the victim of masturbation passes from one degree of imbecility to another, till all the powers of the system, mental, physical and moral, are blotted out forever.

This is not, however, always the case. In some individuals there is all the ravings of the most furious mania, or the deep and cruel torture of hapless melancholy, before the mind is obliterated, and the energies of the system forever prostrated.

False hearing is often one of the first symptoms of insanity from this cause. The jealousy which had marked the character and conduct previously, now becomes greatly increased, and the suspicion of being the subject of remark and ridicule, is confirmed by hearing voices, opprobrious accusations and censure, which confirm all former belief, and establish the truth of what was before only suspicion. With the jealousy and apprehension which had previously

existed, the illusions always coincide, and some individual, often a female for whom there has been some attachment, becomes the object of particular suspicion. Her voice is heard in every direction—her image presents itself in his dreams. In his reveries, which are frequent, he sometimes suspects that all around him, or particular individuals, know his thoughts. He hears them utter, as they move about, what was passing at the same instant of time in his mind.

There are circumstances attending the insanity from masturbation, which renders this the most distressing form of mental disease. I allude to the difficulty of breaking up the habit while laboring under this malady. When insanity is once produced by it, it is nearly hopeless, because the cause of disease is redoubled and generally perpetuated. The libidinous desires are generally increased, and the influence of self-restraint cannot be brought sufficiently into action to prevent the constant, daily, and I might say almost hourly recurrence of the practice. Thus the cause is perpetuated; and in spite of every effort, the disease increases, the powers of body and mind fail together, and are lost in the most deplorable, hopeless, disgusting fatuity! And yet the practice is not abandoned

All the remaining energies of animal life seem to be concentrated in these organs, and all the remaining power of gratification left, is in the exercise of this no longer secret, but loathsome and beastly habit.

Those cases of insanity arising from other known causes, in which masturbation is a symptom, are rendered more hopeless by this circumstance. It is a counteracting influence to all the means of cure employed, either moral or medicinal; and coinciding as it does with whatever other causes may have had an agency in producing disease, renders the case almost hopeless. Of the number of the insane that have come under the observation of the writer, (and that number is not small,) few, very few have recovered, who have been in the habit of this evil practice; and still fewer, I might say almost none, have recovered, in which insanity or idiocy has followed the train of symptoms enumerated in a former chapter, indicating the presence of the habit, and its debilitating influence upon the minds and bodies of the young.

Most of the cases of insanity from this cause, commence early in life; even confirmed and hopeless idiocy has been the melancholy con-

sequence, before the victim had reached his twentieth year.

Of eighty males, insane, that have come under the observation of the writer, and who have been particularly examined and watched, with reference to ascertaining the proportion that practised masturbation, something more than a quarter were found to practise it; and in about ten per cent., a large proportion of which are idiotic, the disease is supposed to have arisen from this cause.

The proportion is probably somewhat less in the other sex.

On a former occasion I observed that the absolute abandonment of the practice, even in those whose minds were unaffected by insanity, was not easily effected. If no *voluntary* practice is continued, the habit may be so far established, and the susceptibility to the complaint be so great, that slight irritation will produce it, and that often for a long time after the danger is appreciated, and the victory over the propensity achieved so far as cautiously avoiding known and intentional indulgence. Nocturnal pollution and involuntary emissions come from slight causes and trifling irritation, but perpetuate, for a long time, all the train of unhappy

influences that have been heretofore detailed. The unfortunate subject of this detestable vice, whose mental energy is unimpaired, and whose moral feelings are susceptible of impression, can be persuaded to abandon it, if the danger is set before him in its true light ; but hundreds can bear me testimony, that the effects of it are long felt, and the involuntary excitement produced by dreams, lascivious companions, warm beds, and improper intercourse with corrupt society, has for a long time had its influence in retarding complete recovery to health. With the insane we can have no such hopes, and no such prospects of cure. They will rarely form resolutions on the subject, and still more rarely adhere to them. Reason, the balance wheel of the mind, being denied them, they are obnoxious to the influence of all the propensities in a high degree.

After the practice of masturbation as a voluntary habit is entirely suspended, long and persevering efforts will be required to remove the effects from the system, and restore it to vigor and soundness. The individual himself must exercise great self-denial, and resolve to persevere with the means and overcome all obstacles that may be in his way, however formidable and

difficult. The regimen to be adopted must be strictly adhered to on all occasions. As the inebriate would probably never conquer his appetite for alcoholic drink if he indulged once a month only—so in this habit, the occasional indulgence will thwart the whole plan of cure. The diet should be simple and nutritious; the exercise should be moderate and gentle; indulgence in bed should not be allowed, and the individual should always sleep alone. A mattress is better than a soft bed. He should rise immediately upon waking, and never retire till the disposition to sleep comes strongly upon him. The cold bath is a valuable remedy; a sea bath is better, and the shower bath is often superior to either.

CHAPTER IV

AVOIDING, as I intended, all consultation of authors on the diseases which follow masturbation, I shall only detail cases which have come under my own observation, and remedies of which I have seen the good effects. I commenced by remarking that the symptoms attending the early indulgence of the habit can always be cured, if the practice be wholly discontinued. From the apprehension that the cause of these symptoms is often overlooked by the best physicians, it is conceived that the history of the first impression of the habit upon health and intellect is of the greatest importance. Whenever, therefore, a train of symptoms, such as was described in a former paper, takes place at a time of life most obnoxious to the injurious influences of masturbation, the cause not being apparent, the patient should be closely questioned as to this habit; and but too often, the whole mystery of the cause, so long unknown to the patient, parent and physician, will be developed.

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Case 1. A respectable young gentleman, of one of the learned professions, was out of health for a long period; his head and eyes suffered exceedingly, and he was in a state little short of insanity. He placed himself under the care of one of the most eminent men in the metropolis, and followed his prescriptions a year, but without benefit. He then called upon another, who asked him if he was addicted to masturbation, to which he answered in the affirmative. The advice given him was principally to abstain from the indulgence, and his health gradually improved, and is now re-established.

Case 2. D., aged 20, had ill health for a year or more; he was pale, feeble, nervous—lost his resolution—had no appetite—took to his bed much of the time, and became dull, almost speechless, and wholly abstracted and melancholy. His brother was his physician; but not ascertaining the cause of the symptoms, he gained no advantage over the disease, and the unhappy young man was constantly losing strength and flesh. After a while he came under the care of the writer. He was in the most miserable condition conceivable; emaciated, feeble, pallid—had night sweats, diar-

rhœa, or costiveness, total loathing of all food; his heart beat, his head was painful, and he felt no desire, and would make no effort to live. Suspecting masturbation, I found, upon strict inquiry and watching, that my suspicions were well founded. I pointed out the danger of the practice, assured him that it was the cause of all his sufferings, and that he might be restored to usefulness and health again, if he would strictly adhere to the course prescribed for him. He took bark and iron alternately for a long time, pursued a course of gentle exercise and invigorating diet, and gave up at once the vicious indulgence. After a long time he wholly recovered, and is now a healthy and valuable citizen.

Case 3. W., aged 27, called for advice in the summer of 1834, having had ill health for some eighteen months or two years. He complained of confusion in the head and pain in the eyes, indigestion, palpitation of the heart, and difficulty of respiration. His sleep was disturbed, his temper irritable, and he felt dissatisfied with himself, and greatly inclined to gloom and melancholy. He complained of listlessness and indisposition to any bodily efforts, and of inability to fix his mind upon any sub-

ject, or give his attention to any business. His hands were cold, countenance pale and dejected, pulse frequent, and his whole system in a state of great irritation. It was ascertained that for two or three years he had been in the daily habit of masturbation. For eight or nine months past he has discontinued it; he is, however, occasionally subject to nocturnal emission, which had thus interfered with his recovery; but he is better, and under the use of tonic remedies, exercise and generous diet, feels confident of recovery, having gained his spirits and appetite.

Case 4. F., aged 20, was for a long time in the habit of masturbation. He was for years confined to the house, and much of the time to his bed. By long indulgence, the habit had become irresistible, and the consequences truly deplorable. His mind was as fickle and capricious as that of an infant, and his health wholly prostrated. For five or six years he was the most wretched being imaginable. Nocturnal pollution, spontaneous emission, and all the evils resulting from unrestrained indulgence, were presented in this truly unhappy young man. He had been apprised of the danger which the continued practice would bring upon

him, and was sensible that all his trials had their origin in this vice ; and yet the propensity had become so strong that he could not resist it ; and if he did, the consequence had become such that little benefit was derived from his good resolution. In his intercourse with his friends he was covered with shame and confusion, and seemed to feel conscious that every individual he met with knew, as well as himself, the height and depth of his degradation. In this condition, in a fit of desperation, he attempted to emasculate himself, but succeeded in removing one testicle only. After he recovered from the dangerous wound which he inflicted, he began to get better ; and after two years he recovered his health and spirits. He has since, at the age of 45, *married* a very clever woman, and they live in peace and harmony.

Case 5. W., a young man 20 years of age, had been feeble and dejected for two years. He was pale, torpid, irresolute, and shamefaced in the extreme—so much so, that I could not catch his eye during a sitting of an hour. He complained of his head, of short breathing and palpitation of the heart, and of extreme debility. His extremities were cold and damp, his muscular system remarkably flabby, and his snail-

like motions evinced great loss of muscular strength. His father, who accompanied the young man, said that he had consulted many physicians without benefit. 'The moment that he came into my room, I was strongly impressed that he was the victim of this solitary vice. I questioned him some time without ascertaining the cause of the disease. His father was wholly ignorant, and the physicians had not suspected it, or inquired concerning it. I requested a private interview—told him the danger of such habits, the importance of ascertaining the true cause of disease, and my suspicions that he was in this habit, and that if so, he would fall a victim to its influence. He then acknowledged that he was in the daily practice of masturbation, and had been for three years—that he often also had spontaneous emissions, &c. He had never suspected that it had any influence upon his health. This young man afterwards became insane and idiotic. He is now a most disgusting, filthy idiot, and will probably never recover.

The symptoms which follow masturbation, viz., nocturnal pollution and spontaneous emission, often continue after the victim of the vice is made sensible of the danger of voluntary

indulgence. These require distinct and separate consideration. In some cases they become very obstinate; and in spite of every effort, continue to make such a waste of vital energies as to prevent a recovery of the health—and the new form of disease continuing, the same fatal results follow which took place from a continuance of the habit. The local irritability of the organs of generation often becomes so great, that the ordinary evacuations of the bowels and bladder produce an emission; and even lascivious ideas, riding on horseback, or other equally slight irritations, have the same effect. Such cases require the utmost care to afford any chance of recovery.

In such cases, the regimen must be strict, the diet should be simple and nutritious, and sufficient in quantity; it should be rather plain than light and abstemious; no stimulating condiments should be used, the suppers should be particularly light, and late suppers should be wholly avoided.

All stimulating drinks, even strong tea and coffee, should be discarded; cider and wine are very pernicious—tobacco in all its forms not less so.

The exercise should be such as to induce

the most quiet repose, and never so great as to produce exhaustion and such fatigue as to prevent quiet rest.

Labor is the best exercise, and if it can be in the open air it will be most beneficial. If in self-pollution or spontaneous emission, the patient be reduced beyond the power to labor, the case is little less than hopeless. Every care should be taken to make the sleep quiet and undisturbed.

A mattress is indispensable; feathers must always be avoided. The hours allotted to sleep should be short, and the patient should never retire till quite sleepy, and should rise on waking, let the time be ever so short. If it be too early to dress and go to business, he should throw open his bed, walk his chamber, and thus insure quiet sleep again when he resumes his bed. Dreams almost always attend spontaneous emissions; these are only avoided by promoting quiet sleep. Light suppers greatly conduce to this. All excitements should be avoided in the evening, especially such company and conversation as is calculated to excite the propensities upon which this evil so greatly depends. If this course is not effectual to remove the habit, and the circumstances of the patient will admit

of it, marriage should be the next step. On this remedy I rely with great confidence, believing it indispensable to the cure when other means fail. It is proper, always, under such circumstances, to consult a physician who has given his attention to the subject. This little manual is not designed to direct remedies or supersede medical advice—its object is admonitory and not remedial; there are remedies that promise much in cases like the foregoing; they must be presented in each case by those who have made the disease a study, and know the condition of the system in which they can be used with propriety and safety. To the writers of the following letters I recommended marriage.

DEAR SIR:—I have been laboring for four or five years past under a disease which has caused me much concern, but which, hitherto, has baffled all my efforts at removal. I am subject to nocturnal emissions of semen, which have occurred without the least interval two or three times every night for several years past. The cause of these emissions was removed long ago. I have had recourse at various times during this period to the advice of many

physicians, and have tried the remedies which they proposed, but all to no purpose. I have reduced my diet—living mostly on vegetables—exercised much in the open air—used the cold bath and friction of the skin—have taken tincture of iron—have taken astringent pills, camphor, &c., and have carefully avoided every excitement and irritation, mental and physical; but all in vain. I am at present, with only this exception, in perfectly good health—but this is the bane of my existence; and if there are any means whatever by which I can rid my constitution of this curse, I am extremely anxious to know them. If as soon as convenient you will favor me with a line upon my case, you will very much oblige,

Yours, &c.

Eleventh mo. 5th, '37.

ESTEEMED FRIEND :—Nothing but self-diffidence, arising from a consideration of the character of the person I am about to address, has for some time prevented me from indulging the desire to do so, since the ends to be answered thereby are not only to add another to the innumerable lessons of human nature and human misery with which the life of a physician so much abounds, and to afford to a sufferer the

consolation of unbosoming himself, and of disclosing the evils which he has brought upon himself, and which nothing but the interposition of a Divine Providence can remove, but also to afford an opportunity of acknowledging the attention thou hast bestowed upon him. For my first acquaintance with thee I am indebted to —, whose kindness and ingenuous conduct towards me I can never forget while I have the recollection of any thing. But the consciousness of having done all in your power must be your reward, as you cannot have the satisfaction of witnessing a successful effect of your exertions. My complaint refuses to yield to the most skilful treatment or the most efficacious remedies.

All that I suspected or anticipated when I last saw thee, has since been realized; and having been repeatedly defeated, have neither faith or hope to make farther attempts. I am resigned to my fate, and entertain no saddening reflections on the past, or anxious thoughts for the future. There is, however, one consideration so entwined about the heart that it can never be obliterated while it continues to throb, that is, the relation which necessarily exists between me and the respectable family to which

I belong, and the obligations I owe to my parents, who have passed the allotted age of man, and who need that attention which they could expect only from a son. But another and the greatest end I can hope to effect is, to prevent others from following my footsteps to ruin. This I think would be accomplished if thou could be prevailed on to write a book on the subject, and thus pour into the bosom of national youth that knowledge which would prevent its thousands, and tens of thousands, from reposing ignorantly and innocently under the seemingly safe but destructive shade of the Bohon Upas of Onanism, which is like the lap of Delilah, in which the mighty Samson slumbered and was shorn of his power. A physician, necessarily so familiar with distress, is not susceptible of the sympathy which one of my situation must feel for his fellows, but thou very well knowest, that if the sordid practice to which I allude does not destroy both the physical and mental powers of all who come under its influence, it is because they are both originally strong. It must at least relax and weaken the most robust body and vigorous intellect.

'Thou hast doubtless already suspected who I am from the description of my case; and as my

name is unknown to thee, the addition of it will be useless. And as I must conclude as abruptly as I began, I trust that, should I exhibit a confidence unbecoming the occasion, thy benevolence will not fail to ascribe it to the ardor of my feelings.

In haste, but with due respect, I subscribe myself,
Thy friend.

Let me not be misunderstood; I do not recommend marriage to the masturbator; by no means. If he has not strength of principle to abandon the practice after he has learned its evil consequences, he should be doomed to perpetual celibacy, and not contaminate offspring with his moral pollution and physical imbecility. I have no advice for him but to abandon his evil practices and abstain from the degrading sin.

To those who may have been led astray in youth, and when informed of the danger and satisfied of the sinfulness of the practice have abandoned it, but have suffered from spontaneous emissions afterwards, I have, if other means fail, recommended marriage. I speak of it as a *remedy*, only. In all instances in which I have known of such advice being followed, the remedy has been effectual.

CHAPTER V.

THE following cases are added to those published in the Journal.

Case 6. When on a journey in a neighboring state, I was consulted in the case of a young gentleman of education, who is now a member of one of the learned professions. He had passed reputably through his college course, and proved a ready scholar in his profession—a gay, social, agreeable young man. He was not successful in business, and returned and secluded himself. From this time his character was changed;—he became shy, suspicious and reserved; apprehended that his presence annoyed every person with whom he associated; he retired almost wholly from the observation of the public, and shut himself up in his father's house; he was even jealous of some members of his own family. In one instance he was persuaded to attempt teaching—in a week his resolution failed him; and although he appeared competent and ready as a teacher, and was

popular with the school, yet he abandoned his charge. He had lost his self-respect, and he believed that he was the subject of jest and ridicule of all his acquaintances. At this time his friends consulted me in his case. I saw and conversed with him;—his condition was most unhappy; timid and irresolute in the extreme, he had no confidence in himself, and none in his friends and mankind. I inquired if he was not in the practice of masturbation. He did not admit it, but rather evaded the question. I gave him a general caution on the subject, prescribed diet and regimen for him, but little or no medicine. When I returned from my journey, I found a letter from him of a full sheet, and afterwards received another, acknowledging that he was a victim of this practice, and that it was doubtless the cause of all his calamities. In a few months he became insane, and went into one of the institutions in New England. He became exceedingly imbecile, both in mind and body. After some months he improved; but when I last heard from him, he was far from well, and gave very little promise of ever being useful.

Case 7. A young man, a graduate of one of the New England Colleges, commenced this

practice early in life. While in college, he pursued it to so great a degree, as to bring upon him all the nervousness, irritability of temper, and suspicion of associates which characterizes the aggravated effects of this pernicious habit. After he left college, he commenced the study of a profession, but made little progress, and finally abandoned it. Since that time he became decidedly insane ; he was for a time violent and dangerous. I was consulted by his friends, and suggested to them the probable cause of all his difficulties. Upon investigation, it was found that he had pursued the course before alluded to, and was still in the practice to an extent quite uncommon. In this state he came under my care. He was the most shamefaced and degraded looking human being conceivable ; it was next to impossible to catch his eye ; he stooped and walked as tottering as a man of ninety. So conscious did he seem of his degraded state, that he covered his head in his coat, drawing it over his head, and remaining in this situation the whole day, and almost constantly for the many weeks that he was under my care.

Fully satisfied in this as in all such cases, that medication is of no avail without moral

influence, I made unusual effort to excite in his mind self-respect, and some ambition to be useful and active in life. It was all in vain; he declared that he would never abandon the practice—and he never did. This is a most melancholy case; a young man of respectability, of good education, of respectable connexions, of fine talents, reduced to a condition of the utmost degradation, probably wholly in consequence of the want of admonition from some friend who understood his difficulty, at a time when such an effort would have had its influence upon him.

Case 8. About two years ago, a young woman, aged 22 years, came under my care, in a state of the worst form of insanity. She was furious, noisy, filthy, and apparently nearly reduced to idiocy. She had been in this condition many months, and continued so for some time while with me. She was pale and bloodless, had but little appetite, frequently rejected her food, and was reduced in flesh and strength. Finding her one day more calm than usual, I hinted to her the subject of masturbation, and informed her that if she practised it she could not get well—if she abandoned it, she might. She did not deny the charge, and promised to

follow my advice strictly. In two or three weeks from this time, she was perceptibly better ; her mind improved as her health gained ; and both were much better in the course of a few weeks. The recovery was very rapid in this case. At the end of six months she had excellent health, was quite fleshy, and became perfectly sane, and has continued so, as far as we have known, to this time.

Case 9. In the spring of 1837, I was consulted by the father of a young woman who had, for four years, been in the worst possible condition of health. She had consulted many eminent physicians, who had prescribed remedies and regimen for her without benefit. On first seeing the patient, I was impressed that the cause of her illness had not been understood, which had rendered all remedies unavailing. Upon inquiring of the patient, I found that she had been the victim of self-pollution. I cautioned her to abandon the practice, prescribed some remedies, and saw her no more.

More than a year from the time of seeing her, I heard directly from her parents, who sent me word that she had entirely recovered her health and energy of mind, and that my prescriptions had entirely cured her.

Case 10. Not long since a case of periodical insanity came under my observation, the subject of which was a young lady. The disease had existed ten years without any material change. Suspecting that masturbation was the cause, I directed her mother to ascertain, if possible, and inform me. Some months after, I received intelligence that my patient was better, and that my suspicions of the habit were confirmed by the observation of her friends; the case is not without hope, although so long standing, if the cause is removed.

Three or four similar cases have been under my care recently, in which individuals of the same sex have been reduced to the same degraded state. They are now, and will continue to be while life remains, a melancholy spectacle of human misery, without mind, without delicacy or modesty, constantly harassed by the most ungovernable passion, and under the influence of propensities, excited to morbid activity by a vice far more prevalent than has been supposed, with both sexes.

A large proportion of the "bed ridden" cases, of which there are so many in the community, will be found to have originated in this cause. I never see a pale, sickly lad from 15

to 20, especially if he be shy, shamefaced and retiring, but what I suspect him of this vice ; and among a hundred that I have questioned, I have rarely been mistaken.

Case 11. The following case illustrates this fact, and shows also the ignorance of friends and even physicians, of the cause of disease in many aggravated cases. A young man was brought from a distant part of the commonwealth by his brother, who was a physician of more than common intelligence, and placed under my care. The first impression which I received from his appearance was, that he was a victim of this solitary vice. His brother gave me a history of his situation, which was nearly as follows :—When about 18 years of age, he was feeble, sickly, and unable to labor : he had continued in this state four or five years, and gradually got better, so that during the summer previous to his consulting me, he had labored on a farm, and appeared in comfortable health. Late in the fall, he became again listless, stupid and feeble. In the winter, he was decidedly insane. Insanity was followed suddenly by a torpor of the mental and physical powers, perhaps in some measure to be attributed to the medication which had been prescribed for him.

While his brother remained, I suggested to him the probable cause of the malady. He denied the possibility of it, said that he had never suspected it, and that he had lived in the house with him from the time of his first indisposition, and did not believe that he was given to the practice.

In the morning after he left, I examined the patient, and he told me his plain unvarnished story. When about 17 years of age, a hired man of his father's, taught him the practice of self-pollution : he continued it till his ill health came upon him, and for some time after. Towards the close of this period of ill health, he abandoned the practice, and soon improved ; after a while he got so well as to labor, and ultimately quite recovered. Some months before he came under my care, he recommenced the practice, and continued it more than ever ; in a few months he became ill again, and the insanity followed. This was his own story. He remained under my care but a short time, and returned to his friends much in the same condition as he left them, probably ruined for life.

Case 12. The case of a lad of 16, who at an early age exhibited talents and intelligence

quite superior to young men of his age in general. He was dismissed from one or two academic institutions in consequence of the practice of this vice. During the last year, by his imprudence, he was reduced to the worst possible condition. Whenever the contents of the bowels or the bladder were evacuated, the seminal fluid passed with it. He was stupid and imbecile in the extreme; would stand hours perfectly still, regardless of any thing around him. He was apparently unconscious of his evacuations, which passed from him as he stood, or as he lay in his bed, without his regarding them. In this state he came under my care. For a long time the case seemed utterly hopeless; no impression was made upon him, excepting that his habits of cleanliness improved. Every opportunity was taken to impress upon the wreck of mind which remained, the necessity of an abandonment of the habit, even to the continuance of his life. In a month or two, there was considerable improvement of his health, and very perceptible increase of mental vigor. At present he is far better, and considerable hope is indulged that he may be restored to his friends and to usefulness, if increasing vigor does not induce him

again to return to the practice, which nearly cost him his life.

Case 13. Is a respectable young man from one of the colleges in New England. While in the seminary, he became jealous of his friends, and suspicious of all around him, and left the institution. He had been in the practice of masturbation till his health had become delicate, and his nervous system very susceptible. He became convinced of the pernicious influence of this practice, and abandoned it; but alas! it was too late. His mind became alienated, partly perhaps in consequence of the continuance of nocturnal pollution, after the voluntary practice had been abandoned. In this state of mind, he made a serious assault upon the person of a friend, to revenge some imaginary insult, or supposed injury. In consequence of this he was thrown into prison. After a while, he came under my care. He had mind and feelings the most acute and sensitive; he was conscious of the cause of his calamity, and very anxious to be cured; such was the excessive irritability of his system, and the excitability of his feelings, that the occurrence of this spontaneous emission would render him almost frantic; he was jealous of every body

around him, suspected all his associates of plots to injure, and of words and gestures to insult and abuse him ; in more than one instance, he rushed from his room, and made an assault upon the most innocent individual of his associates ; he even suspected me, from some smile or hint, of plotting mischief to ensnare him. Such was the state of his mind at one time, and so frequently did he make these assaults, that we were constrained to confine him for a short period. He was constantly sensible of the cause of his condition, and very solicitous for the removal of it ; he was even desirous to be emasculated, believing that this would terminate his misery and afford him an opportunity of usefulness again.

Since writing the above, I received a letter from this young gentleman, dated Jan. 16, 1838, and another from a patient under my care, which exhibit, in a strong light, the jealousy, suspicion and disposition to seclusion, which is so often spoken of in such cases.

DEAR SIR :—When I left —— under your care, it was with no sanguine expectations of ever enjoying much happiness without. But I thought that at least I would try in what manner

I should be treated by my fellow men, after so long and melancholy a confinement. I hoped it would be thought that the time for showing me mercy had come, and that mercy would be universally extended to me.

But my situation has been more disagreeable than I expected. Persecution has not yet ceased, even though I lived for several months last summer near half a mile from any neighbors, and am now, in the depth of winter, living in solitude. But what is worse to me, even, than contemptible insult, my health has for some time been failing. The bowel complaint, which has troubled me so long, and was relieved by the constant use of opium, induced me to adopt the use of that drug; and I have continued it ever since. Whether it is owing to that or to other causes, (I have no doubt myself that it is owing to that,) my digestive powers have become greatly weakened. I am subject to frequent and very painful attacks of the colic, which leave me in a very debilitated state. To struggle with such a disease all alone, in a cold and uncomfortable dwelling, is certainly a lot not to be desired. I need some other person to be with me; but I have none, and fear I can get none.

In these circumstances you will probably not be surprised that I should wish to obtain admittance somewhere, where, if I must die, I can die in peace; and if there is any chance of my getting better by the use of means, means can be employed.

I have been at —— already, and returning thither would not be likely to add to my uncomfortable notoriety, as would be the case, if I went to ——. I hope that these considerations, together with your own knowledge of the unquestionable unhappiness of my case, will have an influence over your decision as to the propriety of my re-admission. I was glad to get away last spring, and shall now be glad to return. For,—I am unfit for the world without.

With regard to the length of time which I should wish to spend there, it would, if I should live and be tolerably comfortably situated, be several years at least. With regard to the means of defraying my expenses, perhaps some employment might be obtained for me which should be sufficient for that purpose, and at the same time keep me properly screened from notice.

I should wish to go on immediately, if your decision is favorable to my application.

I am, sir, very respectfully, yours, &c.

Feb. 2, 1838.

DEAR SIR :—Trust me—give me presently an honorable discharge—and after all that has been said and done, I will acknowledge nothing amiss in it. Let me once more go abroad in the world—let me see my friends again—my father, an affectionate mother and sisters, and I will truly affect no complaint which shall hinder me from gaining an honest livelihood. Have pity upon my mother—she will die herself of grief at my loss—if I am lost. Oh no, say not that I am. Deliver me—make record that I am cured—and when I am dismissed—I call upon God to witness my sincerity in this my last declaration—I will be as one dead to any other statement than that I was handsomely treated whilst I was here. Oh, who shall I appeal to if not to God to witness the truth of what I now say. Believe me, Doctor, my conduct here—the various accounts that I have delivered of myself—are not worthy of a final judgment against me. I was influenced to say and do what I have, by sentiments entirely foreign to my natural disposition. Oh, there are those that I love, and dearly—and I think there are those who have grossly misrepresented my true feelings. O, Doctor, I am aware that even now,

and at my elbow, there is one writing things against me, which are as false as ill advised. He knows me not—nor nothing that evinces the probability that I deserve the chastisement which he, from a wretched conceit, would be transported to see immediately inflicted on me. O, Doctor, he does not merit your confidence. Place none in him. 'T is ——. What he says is false—basely so. He would, I am satisfied, hurry me to my long account—and I know from his reckless conversation, that no falsehood, however black, he would omit to conjure up, to despoil me of life.

Perhaps he has even looked over what I am now writing to you. He is writing himself, and I am unfortunately so situated that he can look over my shoulder. He may be writing that even now himself which shall decide my fate. Oh, trust not to *him*, if any other of his companions. I shall be missed truly—no one of my relations who know me will believe, for a moment, that I should be so rash as to destroy myself, let me be where I will. It has undoubtedly been told you, that I contemplated it. It never entered into my heart. Oh, think yourself only for a day more. How could I commit suicide, while my mother, who sets more by me

than any other of her children, could not survive the intelligence a day. Let not —, nor no one else here, prejudice you against me. 'Tis false that I am prepared to die. Oh let me, while under the control of the head of his institution, escape the unmerciful thing. Look about you, Doctor, consider well whence I came, who I am, and those who busy themselves in informing against me. Grant me but to go away as well as I came, and there shall not let slip a day when I will not think of you as an individual for whom I should feel willing to undergo, as proof of my gratitude, any penance short of life. I know not what to add—I cannot bear to think of my mother. O, Doctor, I beseech you let me escape. Have you not warrant, if there is no faith in man, that I should still be at your mercy, and thus devoted to the science, if it were possible for me to have that ingratitude and folly as to presume to say aught, if I knew any, to the disparagement of those things which it was my misfortune here to become associated. Oh, I must be safe after all. These things dwelt in my imagination, before thus actually intimidated. Therefore here is no disclosure to my prejudice. It is not necessary, because I have solved the riddle, as in

the case of Pericles of Tyre, to forfeit my life perchance. 'Tis nothing new to me, this necessary resource of science. Think of me—are there not others who deserve this horrible chastisement more than I? There are those who would not be missed—*I shall be*. There are few that *despise* me where I am truly known. Then know me yourself, Doctor, for something more worthy.

What shall I say? Alas! I can develope nothing with any assurance now. Has the cup passed? The mischief is not in me. It has been bred in the hearts of those who are stone to their own kin. Have not I brothers and sisters too? O, Doctor, you are greatly misinformed, if it is said that I do not love them like a brother. They love me, and will mourn my loss severely. See my father's family—behold my mother, brothers, sisters, and all—and if you have the sympathy of a parent too—I am delivered. I am sure you would deliver me at once, if you was acquainted with every thing which has a bearing upon my case. It must be that you are ill advised. — has done me mortal injury, and so has Mr. —, I am convinced. There is no uprightness in those who have pretended to describe my character.

I dare not repeat what I have good reason to believe has been said of me. There are two or three who urge me to let them see what I write to you—which is as much as to say that their own reputation for truth is concerned. Take particular notice of this, Doctor, I have never uttered a single syllable which might be construed into any manner of a threat, (harsh as the word is.) I am innocent of all such charges. I should not deserve my liberty, if I had said or conceived any thing of such hideous character. I tremble to think of the effect of such a terrible falsehood.

I must close. I cannot compose my mind to develope the matter as it should be. I am terrified beyond measure. Give me an opportunity only to confront the man who has so misrepresented me—then I must be safe.

Most respectfully yours.

I have purposely selected a class of most respectable individuals who have been the victims of this vice, because I believe that in our High Schools, Academies and Colleges, the evil is as alarming, or more so, than among an equal number of young men in any of the humble walks of life. I am confident that the seden-

tary and inactive are more commonly its victims than the laborious and active. The idle, sedentary, and those who pursue light employments, have more frequently come under my observation, and are most likely to suffer serious injury. Young men who congregate together more than those who labor secluded from associates—students, merchant's clerks, printers and shoemakers, more than those young men who labor at agricultural employments or active mechanical trades. Labor in the open air conduces to sound sleep, and invigorates the physical powers; in this way tends to prevent the practice, and in some measure fortify the constitution against its effects;—at least the same indulgence will produce less perceptible influence; but no means will secure any person from danger, *for no class of the young is exempt from the most melancholy and fatal results, who are, to any extent, in the habit of this secret vice.*

I am aware that full credence is not given by all to the extent of the evil which results from this cause. My own knowledge is almost exclusively derived from observation. I was not sensible of the *extent* and *frequency* of the practice, nor of the disastrous effects which fol-

lowed it, till circumstances placed me in the way of extensive experience. I was obliged to believe, however reluctantly, what was constantly before my eyes.

For the last four years, it has fallen to my lot to witness, examine and mark the progress of from ten to twenty-five cases, daily, who have been the victims of this debasing habit, and I aver, that no cause whatever, which operates upon the human system, prostrates all its energies, mental, moral and physical, to an equal extent.

I have seen more cases of idiocy from this cause alone, than from all the other causes of insanity. If insanity and idiocy do not result, other diseases, irremediable and hopeless, follow in its train; or such a degree of imbecility marks its ravages upon body and mind, as to destroy all the happiness of life, and make existence itself wretched and miserable in the extreme.

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
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